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ABSTRACT

The development of a regional credential for administrator certification is discussed as a means to increase the supply of qualified applicants for educational administrative positions in the Northeast. Relevant issues are addressed, which include voluntary/mandatory compliance, administrator experience level at which certification should occur, means of renewal, and changes in certificate titles. Barriers to success are discussed, which include conflict between quality and quantity, divergent administrator preparation program standards, administrator shortages caused by increased mobility, negative impacts on women and minority candidates, and resistance from higher education. Recommendations call for the implementation of an outcome-based assessment of administrator training program graduates, development of a regional credential, and establishment of a regional task force. Appendices include generic standards for program approval, specific evaluation criteria for educational administration programs, and recent state efforts to review administrator certification. (18 references)
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**Increasing the Quality and Supply
of Administrators in the Northeast:
A Northeast Regional Credential
for Administrators**

by

David Title

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 **The Regional Laboratory**
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**Increasing the Quality and Supply of
Administrators in the Northeast:
A Northeast Regional Credential
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**A Policy Brief Prepared
by David Title**

**for the Commissioners of Education in the Northeast and the
Administrator Standards Working Group of the Northeast Common Market**

1990

**The Regional Laboratory for Educational Improvement of the Northeast and Islands
300 Brickstone Square, Suite 900, Andover, MA 01810**

To ensure that the Northeast continues to have highly qualified educators into the 21st century, the commissioners of education from seven Northeast states and The Regional Laboratory are working toward a Northeast Common Market for educators. One step toward that goal was the adoption in December 1989 of a Northeast Regional Credential for teachers and specialists from selected subject areas. Other projects include developing visionary credentials for special educators and administrators and developing guidelines for teacher induction programs.

As state education agency and Lab staff have worked on various components of the Northeast Common Market project, they have prepared policy briefs for the commissioners that discuss the issues and offer a variety of options. A list of these papers can be found after Appendix C.

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Table of Contents

The Importance of the Problem	1
The Current Status of Certification Regulations	3
Degrees and Credits Required	3
Internship or Practicum	3
Testing Requirements	7
The Position of Assistant Superintendent	8
Some Considerations of a Regional Credential	8
The Barriers to Implementing a Regional Credential	11
Quality Control Issue	11
Program Approval Standards	11
Generic Standards	12
Standards for Administrators	12
Outcome-Based Evaluation: One Way to Implement a Regional Credential	16
Potential Consequences of Implementing a Regional Credential	18
Impact on Administrator Supply	18
Impact on Women and Minority Candidates	19
Impact on Colleges and Universities	19
The Steps That Need to be Taken	20
References	
Appendix A	
Generic Standards for Program Approval in the Northeast States	
Appendix B	
Specific Criteria for Evaluating Programs in Educational Administration	
Appendix C	
Recent State Efforts to Review Certification of School Administrators	

List of Tables

Table 1a	Entry Requirements for Superintendents of Schools in the Northeast States (Initial Certificate)	4
Table 1b	Entry Requirements for Assistant Superintendents of Schools in the Northeast States (Initial Certificate)	5
Table 1c	Entry Requirements for Principals and Assistant Principals in the Northeast States (Initial Certificate)	6
Table 2	The Program Approval Process in the Northeast States	14

Executive Summary

Several states in the Northeast report a decline in the quality of applicants for administrative positions. One way to increase the supply of skilled administrators in the region would be to implement a regional credential for administrators. Such a regional certificate would increase the supply of skilled administrators by providing common, high-quality standards for the licensing of educational administrators.

Current certification regulations make it difficult for administrators (new or experienced) in one state to seek employment in another. These inconsistencies are most apparent in the areas of degrees and credits earned, internship and testing requirements, and requirements for the position of assistant superintendent. The consequence of this inconsistency is that it lessens the supply of qualified individuals who seek employment when vacancies arise.

A regional credential could expand this supply by reducing the barriers to mobility, especially for entry-level administrators. Issues surrounding the regional credential include:

- Should it be voluntary or mandatory?
- Should it be for entry-level or experienced administrators?
- How should the credential be renewed?
- Should there be changes in certificate titles?

To make the regional credential successful, several barriers and potential negative consequences need to be overcome including:

- The conflict between expanding the supply of administrators and maintaining quality control
- Program approval standards for preparing institutions
- Existing state task forces
- Worsening shortages of administrators in some states because of their newly increased mobility
- Any negative impact on women and minority candidates
- The resistance of colleges and universities

One promising way to overcome many of these barriers is by implementing an outcome-based assessment of graduates of administrator training programs. Common regional competencies would provide the basis for such an assessment of individuals.

The payoff from a regional credential could be enormous, but it will require substantial time and financial commitments. A regional task force, representative of all stakeholder groups in the region, needs to be established to work out the details of such a credential.

Increasing the Quality and Supply of Administrators in the Northeast: A Northeast Regional Credential for Administrators

In the past several years, serious questions have been raised about the quality of applicants seeking positions in educational administration in many parts of the Northeast. One possible way to increase the supply of skilled administrators seeking positions in the region is to implement a Northeast Regional Credential for administrators. This credential would be a license to serve as a school administrator in any of the seven Northeast states.

To hold an administrative position in any one of the seven states, one must meet the various licensing requirements in each state¹. Certification requirements often differ in important ways from state to state, making it difficult for would-be administrators in one state to work in a neighboring state, thereby restricting the supply of skilled administrators for any one district to draw on in making its hiring decisions.

There are four purposes to this paper:

1. To explain the importance of this problem.
2. To describe the status of certification regulations for superintendents and principals.
3. To discuss the issues related to a regional credential's impact on the supply of administrators in the Northeast.
4. To describe the barriers to implementing a regional credential and what may be done to overcome these barriers.

The Importance of the Problem

Several reports in the past three years have warned that a severe shortage of skilled school administrators either looms on the horizon or exists now in some states in the region. The New England School Development Council (NESDEC) (1988) reported "a decrease in the number and quality of the applicants for public school administrative positions" in the region and that more than half the respondents rated the problem as "severe." The Vermont Center for Educational Leadership Development (1988) warned that "there is an alarming turnover rate of educational administrators in the state," and a Maine Department of Educational and Cultural Services' report in 1988 called the superintendent in that state "an endangered species." Because these reports indicate that the most serious problems may exist at the levels of superintendent and principal, this paper focuses on the possible impact a regional credential could have on the supply of qualified administrators in these positions.

¹Throughout this paper, the terms license and certificate are used synonymously to mean what every administrator must hold in order to work in a school district in the region. This is to distinguish these terms from other uses of term certification. For instance, certification by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards is not intended to be a prerequisite for employment.

The extent of the problem varies among and within states in the region. Although Vermont and Maine are experiencing problems, Connecticut reports no difficulty finding qualified administrators, nor does it anticipate a shortage. Several studies in the Northeast point out that rural areas are experiencing the most difficulty attracting qualified applicants for superintendencies and principalships. Hence, it is likely that, with an aging administrative workforce, at least some part of each state may have difficulty employing qualified administrators in the near future.

The causes of this potential shortage are complex and numerous, and it is not the purpose of this paper to address all of them. Financial considerations, job satisfaction, intense public scrutiny, stress on family life, and so forth play major roles in determining the career decisions of school administrators. However, several of the studies pointed to certification-related problems that may restrict the supply of qualified administrators for any given vacancy.

The proposed regional credential intends to address these certification-related problems. It intends to improve the quality of administrators in the region by providing common, high-quality standards that make the Northeast a leader in the education and licensing of school administrators.

One way that districts may increase the supply of qualified applicants is to recruit from out of state. In the Northeast, where the states are geographically close and where shortages in one state may coincide with surpluses in another, the solution of attracting administrators across state lines seems logical. Connecticut's high salaries, for instance, have attracted many out-of-state applicants.

One reason such recruiting may be restricted is the difficulty of certified administrators in one state becoming certified in another state. The NESDEC study cited extensive and inflexible requirements for certification as one reason that districts may not attract the highest-quality candidates. The study concluded that "implementation of regional certification and portable pension systems may contribute to successful recruitment efforts." (The issue of pension portability is discussed in *Pension Portability in the Northeastern States*, 1990.)

Such interstate recruitment does not simply mean attracting experienced administrators across state lines. Several studies indicated a substantial pool of teachers are certified as administrators who do not seek administrative positions. In fact, many reports state that more than enough teachers hold administrative credentials to fill the anticipated vacancies. New York reports that 28,000 educators who hold School District Administrator certification are not currently employed in positions covered by that license.

There are several possible explanations. Some teachers may be reluctant to enter administration because the salary differential between teachers and administrators has narrowed, particularly in states that have recently enacted salary enhancement legislation. In addition, as the teacher empowerment movement takes hold, some teachers may be able to influence policy without taking on a full-time administrative position. The Maine report (1988) stated that supply of would-be administrators in that state may be largely "illusory," in part because it is difficult to match those holding administrative credentials to the geographic areas where there are openings. Thus, easier interstate mobility may be a device to match inexperienced (but certified) administrators with vacancies in neighboring states.

The Current Status of Certification Regulations

A review of certification regulations for superintendents and principals in the Northeast reveals that interstate mobility in the region is hampered by an array of requirements that discourage experienced and inexperienced administrators from pursuing positions in other states. There are states where certification is virtually reciprocal, but in many other states it is difficult. The problems are less pronounced for experienced administrators than they are for inexperienced, certified administrators.

Some administrators and policymakers may have the perception that the Interstate Certification Compact (ICC) provides reciprocity for administrators in the Northeast. Though true for a few states, that perception is generally inaccurate. For instance, Maine is not party to the agreement for administrators. Massachusetts and New Hampshire impose additional restrictions on administrators moving under the ICC. In New Hampshire, the Certificate of Advanced Graduate Study (CAGS) is required for certification whether or not an administrator has experience in another state. Thus, the ICC is a weak instrument for increasing the supply of skilled administrators across the region.

Tables 1a, 1b, and 1c summarize the certification regulations for administrators in the Northeast. The tables include degrees and credits needed, teaching and administrative experience, internship requirements, testing requirements, and the duration of the initial credential. The inconsistency in these requirements among states in the Northeast impairs the ability of districts to attract the highest-quality school administrators. Specifically, the inconsistency is most problematic in the following areas: 1) degrees and credits required, 2) internship or practicum, 3) testing requirements, and 4) the position of assistant superintendent.

Degrees and Credits Required

States vary in the number of credits required for initial certification for both superintendents and principals. This variation means that, even though an administrator may have met the educational requirements of one state, she or he may need to earn additional credits (or an additional degree) to work in another state. This is true of experienced and inexperienced administrators alike.

For instance, New Hampshire requires a Certificate of Advanced Graduate Study (CAGS) for all superintendents of schools. No other state in the region requires that certificate. Connecticut and New York require 30 credit hours beyond the masters degree for superintendents. Connecticut requires 18 credit hours beyond the masters degree for principals. Most other states require only a masters degree. The impact of the inconsistency in these regulations is that administrators holding only a Masters Degree may not work in Connecticut, New Hampshire, or New York until they meet the additional educational requirements.

Internship or Practicum

Maine, Massachusetts, and New York require a practicum before certification, but Connecticut, New Hampshire, Vermont, and Rhode Island do not. The NESDEC study (1988) cited the existence of administrative practicums as a barrier to supply because of the difficulty of completing one while employed as a full-time teacher or administrator.

**Table 1a Entry Requirements for Superintendents of Schools in
the Northeast States (Initial Certificate)**

State	Degree or Certificate Beyond Baccalaureate	Graduate Credits Beyond Masters	Teaching Experience (years)	Administration/ Supervisory Experience (years)	Internship or One Year of Experience	Testing	Duration of Initial Certificate (years)
CT	Masters	30	8 to include both teaching and administration (must be 3 in administration)		No	CONNCEPT	1
MA	24 credits beyond BA plus practicum	None	3	0	Yes	None	Life
ME	Masters	None	3*	3	Yes	None	5
NH	CAGS or doctorate in school administration	None	0	0	No	None	3
NY	Masters	60, including Masters	3	or 3	Yes	NTE	Life
RI	Masters	36	8 to include both teaching and administration		No	NTE	3
VT	Masters	None	3	2	No	None	2

*Maine allows instructional experience gained outside the classroom, such as in the military, to count toward this requirement.

**Table 1b Entry Requirements for Assistant Superintendents of Schools in
the Northeast States (Initial Certificate)***

State	Degree or Certificate Beyond Baccalaureate	Graduate Credits Beyond Masters	Teaching Experience Required	Administration/ Supervisory Experience Required	Internship or One Year of Experience	Testing	Duration of Initial Certificate (years)
CT	Masters	18	5	0	No	CONCEPT	1
ME	Masters	None	3**	1	No	None	5
MA	24 beyond BA plus practicum	None	3	0	Yes	None	Life
NH	Masters	None	None	None	No	None	3
NY	Masters	60, including Masters	3	or 3	Yes	NTE	Life
RI	Masters	36	8 to include both teaching and administration		No	NTE	3
VT	Masters	None	3	2	No	None	2

13

*Includes deputy and associate superintendent.
**See Table 1a footnote.

14

**Table 1c Entry Requirements for Principals and Assistant Principals in
the Northeast States (Initial Certificate)**

State	Degree Beyond Baccalaureate	Graduate Credits Beyond Masters	Teaching Experience Required (years)	Internship or One Year of Experience	Testing	Duration of Initial Certificate (years)
CT	Masters	18	5	No	CONNCEPT	1
ME	Masters - principal None - assistant principal	None	3*	Yes - principal No - assistant principal	None	5
MA	24 credits beyond BA plus practicum	None	3	Yes	None	Life
NH	Masters in school administration	None	3	No	None	3
NY	30 credits	None	3	Yes	NTE	5
RI	Masters	None	3	No	NTE	3
VT	Masters	None	3	No	None	2

15

16

*See Table 1a footnote.

The impact of this requirement differs depending on whether the person considering a transfer is experienced or not. For experienced administrators, this requirement generally presents no problem since at least one year of experience allows a person to fulfill that requirement. For the teacher holding administrative certification in, say, Connecticut who wants to apply for an administrative position in Massachusetts, this problem can be formidable. This is important because licensing regulations that favor experienced administrators result chiefly in the movement of these administrators without increasing the overall supply of skilled school leaders.

Testing Requirements

Inconsistency in state testing requirements presents yet another hurdle to be overcome for the potentially mobile administrator in the region. Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Maine, and Vermont currently have no testing requirements for school administrators. For these states, testing does not bar administrators from entering. However, administrators wishing to move to Connecticut, New York, and Rhode Island will find they probably need to take a test in order to be licensed.

Administrators wishing to move to Rhode Island, Maine, and New York must achieve a qualifying score above a prespecified number on the core battery of the National Teachers Exam (NTE) in order to be certified. (New York exempts anyone holding certification in another state prior to 1984, when it adopted the NTE as a requirement.) In Connecticut, all would-be administrators must take CONNCEPT, a state-developed basic skills test, whether or not they already had taken the NTE.

Test-taking requirements restrict mobility for two reasons. First, the tests are given rather infrequently. Most openings for administrative positions occur in the spring. The NTE is administered in March and June. If an administrator sees a position in, say, Rhode Island that is advertised in April (a prime recruiting month), she or he may not take the NTE until June, by which time the position may be filled. Although the Educational Testing Service offers special administrations of the NTE (even one-on-one testing), districts are less likely to offer a position to someone lacking a certification requirement, and the potential applicant may decide not to apply for the position in Rhode Island because of the difficulty meeting this requirement.

Second, there is the time, expense, and fear involved in taking the test. The NTE core battery (three tests) takes an entire Saturday and currently costs \$70. Although it may not seem like a large investment of time and money, preparing for the test (which asks questions about subjects that many administrators have not studied in decades) and taking it may involve a considerable investment of time for people that already lead busy lives. Fear of not scoring above the cutoff may be unfounded in many cases, but even a small chance of not passing (for whatever reason) may dissuade some people from taking the test. In 1987, a superintendent from Massachusetts was offered a similar position in Connecticut. On learning that he needed to take CONNCEPT, he turned down the position rather than take the test. The next administration of the test was scheduled for after he started his job in Connecticut, so not passing CONNCEPT would have meant losing his new position.

The Position of Assistant Superintendent

For the positions of principal and superintendent, it is relatively clear how one certificate relates to another from state to state in the region. But the position of assistant superintendent is in a gray area between those two positions, and administrators wishing to move across state lines must be aware of additional differences when considering an application for this position.

In Connecticut, the same certificate (Intermediate Administrator or Supervisor) is valid for principals and assistant superintendents. In Maine and New Hampshire, separate certificates are required for principal, assistant superintendent, and superintendent. In the other four states, one needs a superintendent's certificate to serve as an assistant superintendent.

This patchwork of licensing regulations causes some problems with administrators moving from state to state. Connecticut, Maine, and New Hampshire administrators holding certificates that would enable them to serve as an assistant superintendent of schools in those states must qualify for the superintendent's certification in the other states. This would be, in many cases, a disincentive to applying for positions. For instance, a principal certified as an assistant superintendent in New Hampshire would not be able to apply for an assistant superintendent's position in Massachusetts without meeting the requirements for superintendent in Massachusetts.

Individually, each of these barriers may seem minor, but taken together they can be serious hindrances to supply in the region. Today, if one wanted to be fully certifiable in all seven states in the region as a superintendent of schools, one would have to take the NTE and CONNCEPT exams, complete a practicum, possess a master's degree plus a CAGS (which together must total 60 credit hours), and have eight years of teaching and/or administrative experience. Regional cooperation in reducing this burden on talented school leaders would likely enhance the pool of applicants for administrative positions.

Some Considerations of a Regional Credential

In nearly every state in the region, task forces are in various stages of reviewing the procedure for the certification of administrators. For instance, a task force in Connecticut, comprised of principals, superintendents, central office administrators, representatives of higher education, and teachers, is trying to identify administrator competencies and make recommendations regarding the preparation, assessment, induction, and continual professional development of school administrators. These recommendations are slated to be made in 1991. Massachusetts and New York have recently undergone similar efforts. Maine has just revised its administrative regulations, which were implemented July 1988. The new requirements in Maine consist of a master's degree, an internship, and an administrator action plan for renewal of certification. The other Northeast states are in various stages of review. Appendix C shows a more complete description of these state efforts.

The importance of these state-level reform efforts is that the form of the regional credential must consider these reviews. Maine, for instance, is unlikely to agree to any credential that backs away from its recently instituted requirements. On the other hand, ongoing efforts such as the one in Connecticut, may yield an opportunity. As that state and others feel the

crunch of the economic downturn in New England, they may find it in their best interests to pool their resources and examine the issue of administrator certification on a regional level, where there may be an economy of scale if the outcome is sufficiently rigorous to warrant that state's participation. Said differently, a regional effort may save states money where an existing task force is already underway

The purpose of a regional credential is to increase the availability of highly skilled administrators in the Northeast by providing common, high quality standards and removing certification obstacles. Because administrators possessing a regional credential would be able to work in any of the seven states in the region, licensing regulations that favor experienced administrators would result in mobility of the current workforce without expanding the supply. This consequence would not aid those districts already having difficulty attracting skilled administrators. Only by expanding the supply of highly qualified administrators will these districts find relief.

Keeping this purpose in mind, several issues need to be resolved:

1. Should the credential be voluntary or mandatory?

One option would be to have the regional credential available on a voluntary basis for administrators who may wish to be mobile. Individual states would continue to issue their own state credentials. In essence this system would have two tracks: state-issued certificates valid in only one state and a regional credential valid in all seven states.

Another alternative would be to have the regional credential replace the current state certificates. New administrators would be issued the regional credential on completion of regionally approved programs and would then be able to serve in any of the seven states.

The crucial issue with this alternative is what to do with current certificate holders. Some alternatives include 1) "grandfathering" all current administrators and automatically issuing a regional credential on request, 2) allowing current holders to work in their own states but not regionally unless certain additional requirements are met, or 3) issuing a license to practicing administrators only if they meet the same standards that new administrators must meet.

The second option, a mandatory license, would accomplish the goals of the regional credential more effectively than the first. The first option creates another bureaucratic hoop that administrators must jump through in order to move across state lines. It creates two parallel bureaucracies to serve essentially the same function. These are precisely the types of barriers the regional credential intends to remove.

The second option would be much more effective in increasing the available pool of skilled administrators for districts to recruit and hire. Colleges and universities that currently offer programs leading to certification would almost certainly favor a system with only one track. However, the question of what to do with current certificate holders needs to be addressed so as to effect the greatest increase in the supply of high-quality administrators.

2. Should the credential be for entry-level or experienced administrators?

For all states in the region to accept the regional credential, the quality of the credential holders must be satisfactory to all states. One model of interstate certification would be

to certify only those designated as "master administrators," experienced principals and superintendents who have demonstrated exemplary qualifications through assessments and training. This model is similar to the master teacher standard under consideration by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. Standards for attaining this credential would be as high as or higher than the toughest state standards, thereby allowing anyone attaining the credential to work in any Northeast state.

Although appealing in some ways, the master administrator model does less to expand the pool of highly skilled administrators than a credential valid at the entry level. There would be but few master administrators, and they would be limited to experienced administrators - and then only to those who volunteer to undergo the assessments and training required. However, a regional credential at the entry level would potentially expand the supply to all practicing administrators and teachers holding administrative certification, a far greater number.

3. How should the credential be renewed?

The duration of initial credentials for administrators varies among states. However, one trend is clear: The days of the initial lifetime certificate are numbered. States are moving to licensing administrators for a specific number of years. New York and Massachusetts currently issue initial lifetime certificates, but Massachusetts will switch to five-year, renewable certificates in 1994. Connecticut recently switched from permanent licensing to professional certificates renewable on completion of nine continuing education units (CEUs) every five years. The range for initial administrative certificates in the region is about as broad as it can be, from one year to life. All states except Massachusetts and New York require some kind of inservice training in order to renew the certificates.

It is only natural that any regional credential would be of a fixed duration and renewable. How long the initial credential would be valid for and what the holder must demonstrate to attain renewal is a subject for the states to discuss, keeping in mind that excessively restrictive requirements for renewal may discourage entry into administration.

4. Should there be changes in certificate titles?

The state reports have noted that the potential shortage of administrators spans the entire range of positions although superintendents generally have the greatest turnover rates. Minimally, the regional credential must cover superintendents, assistant superintendents, principals, and assistant principals because these are the most common positions and the ones that have been targeted as potential shortage areas. Some states have suggested that the same problems also exist for special education directors.

The regional credential gives policymakers an opportunity to redefine their vision of school leadership and its implications for the way they license administrators. The skills and abilities that school leaders must possess to be successful may be quite different in the 21st century from what they were when many of these certificate titles were first instituted. The world inside and outside of schools has changed dramatically, and a full-scale study of a regional certificate would not be complete without reexamining the need for the various certificate titles now dotting the region's educational landscape.

Careful study of the need for the many certificate titles should be undertaken as part of this project. The contemplation of a regional credential gives the states an opportunity to come

to a common understanding of what attributes a skilled school leader must possess, whether that administrator is working at the building or district level. In that way, perhaps the regional certificate could be visionary in its standards for licensing school administrators while eliminating some of the barriers to attracting the highest-quality administrators to this region.

Licensing does have limitations, however. For this reason, it is important to understand the regional credential as only one part of the solution. Certification does prevent districts from hiring individuals that the state (or the region) finds unacceptable by setting minimum standards. Licensure is not equivalent to employment. Simply because the state grants someone a license does not mean that he or she will be employed. That person must compete with other certified candidates for the available positions.

The gap between licensure and employment is critical because, for a variety of reasons, not all districts possess the capacity or inclination to choose the most qualified candidate from this pool. Adopting a regional credential, by itself, will not improve the ability of individual districts to select the most skilled administrators from the applicant pool. An important parallel effort to the regional credential is for states to help individual districts improve their ability to choose the best administrators. Otherwise, the effect of increasing the quality of the applicant pool will be lessened by the inability of the local school districts to select the best person.

The Barriers to Implementing a Regional Credential

Despite the advantages that a regional credential could offer districts in the region, numerous forces would need to be overcome to implement a change of this magnitude. To put this matter in perspective, consider that individual states often take years to make slight modifications in their certification regulations. Gaining consensus in a single state is a challenge for even the most skilled policymaker; gaining consensus across seven states takes particular acumen. However, the fact that the seven Northeast states have already instituted a regional credential for some teaching positions shows that this interstate consensus could be achieved. This would be particularly true were the commissioners of each state are willing to commit the human and financial resources necessary to effect the change.

Quality Control Issue

Two competing interests need to be addressed in any change in certification regulations. First, states in the region need to be sure that the quality of certified administrators does not decline as a result of these changes. Second, the license should not be so difficult to attain that otherwise competent administrators are dissuaded from seeking the credential.

The first interest implies that standards for the regional credential be strengthened so that all states can be assured that applicants trained in other states are qualified – an assurance at the heart of any interstate agreement. On the other hand, the second interest implies that regulations should be flexible so that the pool of qualified applicants is expanded, not lessened, as a result of these changes. Though this conflict can be resolved, it is a force to be reckoned with in trying to decide the details of any regional credential.

One basis on which this problem may be resolved is by studying the relationship between the requirements for licensure and the skills necessary to be a successful school administrator. Once these skills have been identified, determining which individuals possess these skills and which do not would follow. Requirements that bear little or no relation to the ability of an individual to become a skilled school administrator serve only to restrict the supply without improving the quality of the total pool.

Essentially, these conflicting interests mean that representatives of the seven Northeast states need to negotiate this issue. As with the regional credential, good faith discussions of each state's fundamental interests in this matter are necessary to produce a solution amenable to all parties.

Program Approval Standards

The chief mechanism by which states assure the quality of their applicants is through the program approval process for colleges and universities that offer programs leading to administrative certification. The underlying theory is that if a program meets the standards set by the state, any graduate of that program is deemed to have met the educational requirements for administrators in that state.

The Northeast states have similar approaches to program approval, usually modeled after one or more national approval approaches, such as the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC). All states require that programs seeking approval conduct a self-study six months to a year prior to a site visit by a state-appointed team. This team then conducts a site visit of three to four days to gather information on that institution's program. They generally issue a report to the state board of education, through the commissioner, recommending approval, nonapproval, or some type of conditional approval. On the average, full approval is for five years (in New Hampshire, it could be for seven). Although the main concept of the program approval process is the same across the seven states, there is some variation throughout the region, as Table 2 shows.

There are two types of program approval standards: 1) generic standards that apply for the preparation of professional educators (administrators and teachers) and 2) standards that are specific to the preparation of administrators.

Generic standards. Virtually all the states have similar categories of standards that institutions of higher education must meet to be approved. These categories include administration, faculty, students, curriculum, facilities and resources, and evaluation. Most require some type of written goals and objectives of the program and standards on student recruitment, admission, retention, and exit. Most require that students be involved in the review process for the program. States do vary the language and specificity of these standards, but a program meeting approval standards in one state would more than likely meet approval standards in the others. Appendix A gives more details on the language of the generic program approval standards.

Standards for administrators. The standards specific to administrators vary from state to state largely because the specific coursework required for certification varies from state to state. The general idea, though, is that the institution must be able to show that it offers enough courses to enable a student to meet all the state's certification requirements. Thus, as certification requirements differ, so do program approval standards.

For instance, Massachusetts has five standards for administrator preparation, and any institution of higher education in Massachusetts must demonstrate how its curriculum matches these standards. Further, as in many states, the internship or practicum is administered by the institution, so state requirements on the internship also affect program approval requirements. Some states, such as New Hampshire, list dozens of competencies that administrators must have, and the institution must show that it offers a program that would enable a potential administrator to master these competencies. Appendix B shows a more detailed breakdown of specific administrator standards for program approval.

Though it may appear nearly impossible to bring these varying standards for administrators into alignment, it is the varying certification requirements that drive these differences. If competencies for certification did not differ from state to state, then the standards for program approval would fall quickly into line. If competencies could be agreed on at a regional level, program approval standards could also be brought forward on a regional level.

**Table 2 The Program Approval Process in the
Northeast States**

State	Self-Study Completed	Who Does Site Visit? How Many?	How Long?	Categories of Approval	Route to Approval	Appeal Route
CT	Completed 3 weeks prior to visit	Representatives of public schools, IHE's, state department, Board of Governors of Higher education (3-10 members)	1-4 days	1. Full (5 years) 2. Provisional (any length) 3. Probationary (any length) 4. Deny approval	1. Visiting team 2. Review Committee 3. State Board 4. Board of Governors	Consultant for Teacher Preparation Program Approval
ME	Prior to visit	Commissioner identifies team, state board and institution approves	Appropriate to the institution	1. Full (5 years) 2. Conditional (6 months to 2 years) 3. Denied for cause	1. Visiting team 2. Commissioner 3. State Board	Commissioner State Board
MA	Prior to visit	Appointed by MA Board of Education. Bureau and institution jointly agree on team	2 1/2 days	1. Approval (5 years) 2. Deferral 3. Nonapproval	1. Visiting team 2. Bureau of Teacher Preparation, Certification, and Placement 3. Board of Education	None
NH	At least 2 months prior to visit	Council on Teacher Evaluation Review Team -- prep, elem/sec, state department, NHCTE, specialists, Professional Standards Board representatives	2-4 days	1. Full (7 years) 2. Conditional (1-3 years) 3. Provisional (<3 years) 4. Nonapproval	1. CTE 2. State Board	25 State Board actions are final and binding

**Table 2 The Program Approval Process in the
Northeast States (continued)**

State	Self-Study Completed	Who Does Site Visit? How Many?	How Long?	Categories of Approval	Route to Approval	Appeal Route
NY	Not required	State Education Department	As appropriate	1. Approval (5 years) 2. Deferral	State Education Department	Commissioner
RI	Prior to visit	Department of Education selects team	3 days	1. Full (5 years) 2. Conditional (2 years) 3. Nonapproval	1. Visiting team 2. Commissioner	None
VT	One month prior to visit	Standards Board of Professional Educators selects visiting team	3 days minimum	1. Full (5 years) 2. Conditional, up to 5 years 3. Nonapproval	1. Visiting team 2. Standards Board of Professional Educators 3. State Board of Education	State Board of Education

Outcome-Based Evaluation: One Way to Implement a Regional Credential

One solution to this issue would be to try to get agreement on common competencies across the region and train regional visitation teams – that is, continue the present process, except at a regional level. Another solution would be to not approve programs at all but to approve administrators themselves on a regional level – that is, instead of training teams to evaluate programs, train teams to evaluate the competencies of people that come out of the programs. Several states, including Connecticut and New York, are currently studying such outcome-based evaluations of programs.

Some outcome-based models of assessment already exist. In Montgomery County, Maryland, for example, all would-be administrators must go through a two-day assessment center before appointment to an administrative position. On a larger scale, the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) operates 55 assessment centers to aid districts in the selection of incoming principals. To bring to life the abstract concept of outcome-based evaluation, it is worthwhile understanding how the NASSP process works.

Trained assessors evaluate the skills of would-be administrators in problem analysis, judgment, organizational ability, decisiveness, leadership, sensitivity, stress tolerance, oral and written communication, range of interest, personal motivation, and educational values. The two-day assessment involves group activities, in-basket exercises, fact-finding exercises, and intense interviewing. Candidates are given numerical ratings on each skill area as well as a final narrative report arrived at by assessor notes, exercise report forms, and consensus discussions by the assessors. Assessors undergo rigorous training to ensure consistency, and the NASSP has conducted numerous studies to validate the process against the actual performance of principals.

Although the NASSP process has limitations, it does provide districts with useful information about potential administrative candidates. Some districts require candidates to undergo an NASSP assessment before appointment. The region may want to research this kind of assessment process further in considering outcome-based evaluation.

The underlying purpose of certification is to ensure that districts hire applicants who are at least minimally qualified for the position. This quality assurance currently is in the form of students taking courses at approved institutions and attaining passing scores on examinations and internships. States have identified the competencies needed for administration in their states, and the institutions of higher education offer courses to match these competencies. On the surface, it sounds intuitive that one must assess whether a would-be administrator has attained these competencies to an acceptable degree rather than counting courses taken from a transcript.

An outcome-based evaluation system would have several advantages. First, quality control would be tightened since graduates of administrative preparation programs would be assessed individually rather than collectively. The current assumption – that if the student passes certain approved courses, the student possesses the competencies may not be valid. A regional assessment would determine which students and, ultimately, which programs are worthy of approval on the basis of competencies attained, not credits earned.

If the performance of graduates on the assessment influences program approval, students would be able to select programs, in part because such institutions produce graduates who do well on the assessment (that is, have graduates who possess the skills to be effective

administrators). If this information were readily available, students shopping in a "free market" for administrative programs would tend to enroll only where the programs are producing skillful administrators, and the least successful programs would be forced to improve or go out of business. This, in turn, could lead to innovations in the preparation of school administrators. Training institutions would not be beholden to state regulations mandating courses with specific titles or content and could design a creative program that allows their students to meet the established competencies.

Second, alternative routes to certification would become easier for would-be administrators. New Hampshire and other states either have or are tinkering with alternative routes for midcareer educators as a method of increasing the supply of qualified administrators (and teachers). These efforts hold some promise in increasing the supply of skilled educators. An outcome-based assessment would allow midcareer people to demonstrate administrative skills acquired in other professions without having to complete coursework they may not need to become successful school leaders. This would be analogous to the way Maine allows instructional experience outside the traditional classroom setting to fulfill a teaching requirement for administrative certification.

Third, the method for judging the effectiveness of programs would improve. Institutions would be judged not just on what the catalog says but on what their graduates can do. Institutions would be able to get feedback on their performance by carefully examining the results of the assessment. Instructors in the institutions would be able to obtain feedback on which of their students' skills need more development in the classroom.

Setting up a regional assessment would be a mammoth undertaking, but its largeness makes it all the more attractive for regional cooperation. There would be a significant economy of scale in having the states gather their best people to pool knowledge to develop competencies, set up an assessment process, train assessors, and send teams into the field to assess students rather than having one or two states try to accomplish this feat single-handedly.

The key to a regional assessment is to set up a credible process so that if a person is judged competent by the regional assessment team, people in all seven states would have assurance that this person possesses the minimal skills necessary to be a successful school leader. Assessments would have to be common and convenient enough so that the assessment itself does not become a barrier to entry. Teams of assessors could set up at institutions at specified times in order to assess graduates.

The cost of creating and administering such an assessment process needs to be addressed. However, significant time and expense is involved in accrediting all institutions of higher education through site visits, self-studies, and reports. A regional assessment's costs may be on a par with the current system's, once it is up and running. Start-up costs are likely to be enormous. As a comparison, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards is allotting approximately \$1 million to develop an assessment for a single teaching field. The region could almost certainly do the task for administrators for less money, but the point is that, if this course is to be taken, efforts must be made to determine the actual cost of such a system and what alternative funding sources may exist.

Needless to say, the training institutions may find this method of assessment threatening. Overcoming their resistance would be a major obstacle to the success of such a system. This problem is largely political rather than educational, and one of the important steps in

designing and implementing the regional credential will be to elicit support and input from all the stakeholders in the region, including colleges and universities that currently prepare administrators.

A regional credential could, of course, be implemented without such outcome-based assessment. Each state could agree to trust the current system of approval in every other state. Or states could set up regional assessment teams to do site visits of institutions. However, there is an opportunity to improve on the present system.

Potential Consequences of Implementing a Regional Credential

Impact on administrator supply. As will be the case when the barriers to teachers' interstate mobility are lessened, the impact of a regional credential on administrator career decisions will vary from state to state. The effect will vary depending on the nature of the incentives available in each state at the present time. For instance, one incentive that drives career decisions is salary, and states in the region vary greatly in the salaries paid to administrators, even adjusting for cost of living. It is not surprising, for instance, to see that Vermont has a high turnover in administrators and that Connecticut does not see a shortage. Nor is it surprising that the lower-paying rural areas are the first to feel the crunch where there may be no statewide problem. (For more discussion on incentives and mobility, see *The Critical Role of Teacher Incentives in the Northeast States*, 1988.)

The point is not to chastise states for low salaries or to analyze every incentive offered in the region. Rather, it is to note that some districts are more attractive to administrators than others, and in a totally free market, it is possible that these districts will be able to draw talented administrators at an even greater rate than they now do. Districts in Connecticut, for instance, may be able to attract even more administrators from Massachusetts if the certification barriers were eliminated. Some states, in essence, trap their administrators because their certification may not be easily transferred. When it can be transferred, some administrators may leave. This outcome, in fact, is just the opposite of what the regional credential aims to accomplish.

The way out of this trap is for the region to create a credential that will increase the supply of skilled administrators not just provide for the mobility of experienced administrators. This is why all requirements for licensure must be examined to ensure that they do not inhibit otherwise qualified school administrators from obtaining the credential. Requirements for licensure are justified when they keep unqualified individuals out of the profession. The key is to design a system that maximizes the number of skilled administrators in the supply pool.

This concern is nontrivial and needs to be addressed in order to have the regional credential meet the interests of all states in the region. Vermont may find, for instance, that the regional credential will likely cause more problems than it will solve by making more attractive salaries easier to attain out of state. Helping states cope with the fear that they may lose talented administrators if this credential were implemented is a crucial part of the regional effort. Increasing the supply of administrators is one way to ensure against such a loss.

Districts unattractive to administrators will be forced to improve the incentives they offer in order to remain competitive in the marketplace. Since some districts do not have the resources, the responsibility for bringing them up to an attractive level will have to fall

elsewhere — most likely to the state. The failure to simultaneously improve the attractiveness of some districts could negatively affect the quality of administrators working in those districts.

Impact on women and minority candidates. As minority student enrollment in many districts continues to increase, the importance of hiring qualified minority administrators rises. Furthermore, some states are looking to increase the number of women administrators in their districts. Both the Maine (1988) and NESDEC reports (1988) cite the relative lack of women in administrative positions as a serious problem in the region. The NESDEC study, for instance, stated that 4 percent of superintendents in the region are women. Nationally, the figure is similar. (See also *Toward More Diversified Leadership: Increasing the Number of Women and Minorities in Educational Leadership*, 1990.)

Because current administrators are predominantly white and male, any system that benefits current administrators over inexperienced administrators would have the effect of hurting women and minority candidates in their job quests. Thus, a regional credential that requires one to be a master administrator, demonstrated partly through experience, would unduly harm women and minority candidates who have the least experience.

An entry-level credential available to all candidates would not have such an effect. In fact, the opposite effect may well come about. Women and minority administrators, many seeking their first administrative positions, may be unable to attain a position in their home states and may be willing to move out of state to get their first positions. Currently, certification regulations hamper that mobility for everyone, but the impact may be greatest on those seeking their first jobs. In Maine, for instance, an increasing number of women hold credentials as administrators, but they are not being selected for administrative positions. With an increase in the number of credential holders, a wider geographic area would serve to increase the chances of these new administrators being selected.

Impact on colleges and universities. Perhaps no group will be affected more by the regional credential than the institutions of higher education that currently prepare school administrators. Changing state regulations always imposes a burden on those responsible for administering these programs.

On the other hand, an outcome-based assessment may actually reduce this burden. The reason is that colleges and universities would be free to offer whatever courses they choose in preparing administrators. Because certification would not be done by transcript analysis, these institutions could be more flexible and creative in their programs, perhaps individualizing each person's program depending on the skills and abilities the student brings from experiences.

Initially, this change would force colleges and universities to reexamine what they are now offering. Courses would need to be justified not because the state mandates them but because they actually help provide students with the skills they need to be successful school administrators. In essence, the region would be saying, "This is what we want school administrators to know and be able to do. You determine the best way for your institution to accomplish it." For colleges and universities, this will be a scary proposition.

The Steps That Need to be Taken

The undertaking proposed in this paper is massive. For this reason, regional cooperation is crucial in making it work. To make the regional credential for administrators a reality, the following steps need to be taken:

1. Obtain the consensus of the commissioners regarding the issues presented in this paper:
 - Will the credential be voluntary or mandatory?
 - Will it be for entry into the profession or for experienced administrators?
 - Will there be renewal requirements?
 - Should there be changes in certificate titles?
 - Will there be an outcome-based assessment?

Funding for this project will be an on-going need and thus needs attention from the start.

2. Gather input from all stakeholder groups, through a process developed by the Administrator Standards Working Group, to work out an agreeable mix of requirements for a regional credential that would satisfy the competing interests of quality control and expanding supply. The Administrator Standards Working Group would make recommendations to the commissioners.
3. Press for the appropriate statutory and regulatory changes necessary to bring the program to fruition. This would largely be the responsibility of the states' commissioners of education and their legal staffs.

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APPENDIX A

Generic Standards for Program Approval in the Northeast States

<u>State</u>	<u>Categories of Standards</u>
Connecticut	Administration, faculty, students, curriculum, facilities and resources, evaluation
Maine	Program justification, organization and administration, curriculum, practicum and clinical experiences, faculty, resources and facilities, students, innovative practices
Massachusetts	Must cover certification standards
New Hampshire	Goals and objectives, organization, admission, retention, evaluation policies, student personnel services, student participation in development, faculty, facilities and instructional materials
New York	Resources, faculty, curriculum, administration, admissions
Rhode Island	Mission, goals, objectives, organization, student recruitment, admission, retention and exit, student personnel services, student participation, faculty, facilities, instructional materials, school/institution relationships
Vermont	Statement of intent, performance criteria, students, faculty, comparable to NASDTEC program, evidence of continuous improvement, curriculum

APPENDIX B

Specific Criteria for Evaluating Programs in Educational Administration

<u>State</u>	<u>Criteria</u>
Connecticut	Courses in foundations of education, psychological foundations of learning, curriculum development, educational administration (these change in 7/91).
Maine	Must offer courses that meet 12 areas in certification requirements.
Massachusetts	Must address these 5 standards: Principal: 1. Knowledgeable in curriculum design, law, budget, plant management, supervision and evaluation, human resources, community, sociology, philosophy, strategies for institutional change, and organizational behavior. 2. Communications skills. 3. Sets goals, establishes priorities. 4. Evaluation of personnel. 5. Treats students and faculty in an equitable and sensitive manner, values group differences. Superintendent: 1. Knows sociology, economics, history, philosophy of education, theories of curriculum design, educational administration in general, supervision and evaluation, human resources, community education, organizational behavior, recent research. 2-5. <i>Same as principal.</i>
New Hampshire	Principal: Competencies in learning theory, curriculum, program evaluation, teacher selection, supervision, evaluation, staff development, educational climate, personnel practices, safety and health requirements, budget, law, group process, communications, school-community relations,

problemsolving, conflict management, change process. Also, admissions criteria, flexible, practicum.

Superintendent:

Curriculum in supervision and evaluation, staff development, change, organizational management, budget, communications, human relations, community-school partnerships,/ development, law, curriculum theory and development, school facilities, reporting procedures. Also, program must be flexible, have a supervised practicum, understand the role of school in culture, have criteria for admission.

New York

Evaluation of program shall include all applicable certification requirements. May use professional standards of accrediting organizations. Curriculum must satisfy commissioner.

Rhode Island

Principal:

Requires professional experience as a teacher for admission; competencies in instructional supervision, evaluation and conference skills, human relations, school law, management and use of information systems, administration and financial management.

Superintendent:

Requires professional experience as a teacher and administrator for admission; competencies in development and administration of programs, funds, facilities, personnel, staff development, administrative processes, school finance and management, human relations, school board relations, law, public relations, politics, social science, management and use of information systems.

Vermont

Evidence that curriculum covers all competencies.

APPENDIX C

Recent State Efforts to Review Certification of School Administrators

Connecticut

- Goal:** To examine issues of administrator certification and develop recommendations and programs regarding the preparation, assessment, induction, and continual professional development of administrators.
- Effort:** A task force -- composed of principals, superintendents, central office administrators, representatives of higher education, and teachers -- is being convened. It will identify administrator competencies and make recommendations regarding the preparation, assessment, induction, and continual professional development of administrators to the State Board by the winter of 1991.
- Timeline:** The program will be implemented over the next two to three years.
- Contacts:** Dinoo Dastur, Chief, Bureau of Certification and Accreditation, (203) 566-8654
- Ray Pecheone, Bureau Chief, Bureau of Research and Teacher Assessment, (203) 566-5352 or 566-6586
- Bureau Chief, Bureau of Curriculum and Instruction, (203) 566-2117

Maine

- Goals:**
- To increase entry-level requirements for administrators.
 - To provide an internship requirement for entry-level administrators.
 - To promote collegiality (i.e., vis-a-vis support systems and action plan development).
 - To promote and recommend more meaningful professional growth development activities for certificate renewal.
- Effort:** The state instituted new certification requirements and twelve knowledge areas in 1988. These requirements increased the number of certificates issued to 15; provided for the entry-level requirement of a masters' degree, the development of administrator action plans to renew certificates, and optional regional support systems for administrators; and required a one-year internship.

An entry-level candidate's transcripts are reviewed for evidence of coursework in the 12 knowledge areas.² In the case of certified personnel, the requirements for renewal include the development of a professional portfolio, completion of a comprehensive needs assessment that is based upon the 12 knowledge areas, and the development and completion of an administrator action plan.

Timeline: The certification requirements were implemented in July 1988. In the spring of 1989, the department began reviewing and approving administrator support system plans and administrator action plans for 1990 candidates for renewal who do not have access to a regional support system. It is currently working with 1991 candidates for renewal.

As of this spring, the department had 17 regional administrator support systems on line. An evaluation is currently being conducted on the impact of the mentor or support systems for renewal candidates.

Contact: Buzz Kastuck, Program Approval Liaison, Division of Certification, (207) 289-5944

Massachusetts

Goals:

- To increase access to the profession.
- To streamline the system.
- To develop a more cohesive conceptual framework for defining the role and function of administrators in schools.
- To build on the competency-based system for administrators initiated in 1982.
- To parallel common standards for teachers.
- To discontinue issuing a lifetime certificate for administrators and develop a new structure for administrator certification that is compatible with the two-tier system for teachers.

Effort: A group of 23 people, the Massachusetts Working Group on Administrator Certification, has addressed the Commissioner's charge to change requirements for administrators. It has recommended the development of a set of common standards in four areas (leadership, management, staff development, and equity) and knowledge-based requirements for each administrative category; the establishment of a two-tier system with a renewal requirement; and increased access to the profession.

² Equivalent training experiences can be utilized to meet the knowledge areas except for Maine school law and teaching the exceptional student in the regular classroom. A thirteenth knowledge area, which addresses equity, was legislated in 1990.

Timeline: The final recommendations to the working group were presented to the Massachusetts Advisory Commission on Educational Personnel in December 1989 from which state regulations were developed. Implementation date is October 1994.

Contact: Margaret Cassidy, State Coordinator, (617) 770-7523

New Hampshire

Goals: To systematically update and upgrade standards in all certification areas, in particular those for central office personnel.
To make the standards flexible enough so different kinds of school districts (urban, rural, and suburban) would be able to staff their central offices with appropriately certified personnel.

Effort: The Professional Standards Board has been working on certification standards for central office personnel for the last five years. The Board released its recommendations to the field for comment in June 1989, with a closing date of 30 September 1989. The Board recommended the creation of certificates for superintendent, generic assistant superintendent, and several specialized assistant superintendents.

Timeline: If the recommendations of the Board are adopted, they would become effective in May or June 1991. However, it is possible that the department might recommend that action on the proposed changes be delayed until a regional effort materializes.

Contact: Joanne Baker, Administrator, Bureau of Teacher Education and Professional Standards, (603) 271-2407

New York

Goals: To improve education for all students in New York's elementary and secondary schools.
To review certification requirements for supervisory and administrative personnel in a methodical way to allow for the leadership needed to enable schools to restructure and reform themselves to meet the needs of students in the 21st century.

Effort: The initial thrust of this activity has its roots in the Regents Action Plan of 1984. The major theme of the plan is the improvement of education in the elementary and secondary schools in the state. The first step to achieve that end is to strengthen teachers. This resulted in a review of certification requirements for elementary and secondary academic teaching areas that had not been reviewed in 20 years. Realizing that good leadership also creates change, the next step in this process is the review of certification requirements for supervisory and administrative personnel.

A task force of 41 people submitted a report on administrator standards to the Commissioner on 1 April 1989. Commissioner Sobol and department staff reviewed the report and its recommendations.

In addition, on 29 September 1989, some 20 individuals discussed with staff the preparation of administrators and supervisors for the 21st century.

Timeline: The Board of Regents has reviewed and is continuing to review draft sets of recommendations on educational leadership. A revised set of recommendations is now being prepared for submission to the Board of Regents. The exact time line for public review of recommendations will be determined after the Board's review.

Contacts: Gerald Freeborne, Executive Coordinator for the Teaching Profession, (518) 474-6440

Charles Mackey, Administrator, Teacher Certification Policy, (518) 474-4660

Rhode Island

Goal: To relate the functions that administrators perform in their respective positions to skills and experiences to ensure quality leadership in the public schools.

Effort: In 1988, the state instituted new certification requirements for superintendents and principals and initiated a new certificate for directors of curriculum and instruction. The new requirements identified coursework that would meet competencies, increased hours, and specified particular courses.

In conjunction with that effort, the state revised its program approval standards for administrator preparation programs. They are basically the NASDTEC standards, but the state went beyond them to develop indicators. The Commissioner held public hearings on the draft standards and indicators in March and April 1989.

Timeline: Certification requirements went into effect in 1988. Program approval standards were approved and adopted by the Commissioner in March 1990.

Contacts: Eloise Boyer, Education Specialist III, (401) 277-6887

Ed Dambruch, Assistant Commissioner, (401) 277-6887

Vermont

Goal: To establish an administrator relicensing system in which administrators will relicense administrators.

Efforts: The Professional Standards Board's committee on administrator relicensing in the process of establishing regional boards to relicense all practicing administrators in Vermont. Administrators seeking to renew their license will submit professional development plans to these regional boards. Based on these plans and the successful completion of their previous plan, the regional board will recommend relicensure to the Professional Standards Board.

The State Department of Education is currently working to establish a pilot mentoring program for all first time principals.

The Administrative Credentialing Subcommittee of the Vermont Development Council is working toward the certification of administrators beyond the state's licensing practices.

Timeline: The regional relicensing boards will be established by September 1990.

Contacts: Richard T. Dillon, School Leadership Consultant, (802) 828-3111

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